

TRADOC Historical Monograph Series

A HISTORY OF ARMY AVIATION – 1950-1962

by Richard P. Weinert, Jr.



*Office of the Command Historian
United States Army Training and Doctrine Command*

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**by
Richard P. Weinert, Jr.**

**edited by
Susan Canedy**

Office of the Command Historian
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Foreword

Since their publication in the 1970s, the two separate works, *The History of Army Aviation, Phase I: 1950-1954*, and *The History of Army Aviation, Phase II, 1955-1962*, have been in steady demand by U.S. Army and other military researchers in the Army aviation field. Appearing in June 1971 and September 1976, respectively, those volumes were written by Mr. Richard P. Weinert, Jr., a staff historian in the Historical Office of the U.S. Continental Army Command until 1973, then Deputy Chief Historian in the Historical Office of the Army Training and Doctrine Command. The two volumes detail the early, formative years of Army aviation following the separation of the ground and air forces of the United States Army and the establishment of the United States Air Force as an independent service by the National Security Act of 1947. The call for this documented study has repeatedly exhausted printings of the two works. Prior to his retirement from federal service in 1988, Mr. Weinert took initial steps to organize his earlier work into a single publication. Since then, Dr. Susan Canedy, Research Historian and Archivist in the Office of the Command Historian, edited the combined manuscripts and completed the many other tasks necessary to bring the work to publication. The resulting volume is a reorganization of the two volumes, in which only redundancies of introduction and conclusion have been deleted. This single volume provides a useful record of the earliest stages of the battlefield function that would come into its own so dramatically in Vietnam and that would eventually be designated an Army branch in 1983.

HENRY O. MALONE, JR.

Author's Preface

Army aviation has grown dramatically in both size and breadth of activities since its inception in 1942. No comprehensive history of this growth has appeared. This monograph attempts to delineate the activities of Army Ground Forces (AGF), the Office of the Chief of Army Field Forces (OCAFF), and the United States Continental Army Command (CONARC) in the development of the aviation program from 1950 to 1962.

The period from 1950 to 1954 witnessed a critical phase in the growth of Army aviation. During this period the helicopter first began to perform a major tactical role, combat experience in Korea pointed the way to future developments, and the formation of the Army Aviation School provided a firm training base for expansion. Following 1954, Army aviation not only introduced new aircraft which significantly improved its capability, but also began development of new doctrinal concepts. The work on helicopter armament and airmobile concepts provided the ground work for the large scale airmobile combat operations which the Army would conduct during the following decade.

Because of the complexity of the subject, it has been necessary to organize this monograph topically rather than chronologically. Cross references are inserted where it is considered necessary to provide clarity.

Most of the primary documentary sources cited in the footnotes are located in the Civil Branch of the National Archives in Suitland, Maryland. Copies of many of these documents have been retained in the files of the United States Army Center of Military History and the TRADOC Command Historian. The published reports and secondary sources dealing with the Transportation Corps may be found in the library of the United States Army Transportation School at Fort Eustis, Virginia. The semiannual historical reports of AGF, OCAFF, and CONARC are in the files of the TRADOC Command Historian and the Center of Military History. The annual historical summaries of the Department of the Army staff elements are also located in the files of the Center of Military History.

The preparation of this monograph would not have been possible without the cooperation and assistance of the staffs of the Transportation Museum and library of the United States Army Transportation School, the United States Army Aviation Museum, *United States Army Aviation Digest*, the library of the United States Army Aviation School at Fort Rucker, Alabama, the National Archives, the United States Army Center of Military History, and the Historical Office, United States Army Materiel and Readiness Command.

The cooperation and assistance of many individuals contributed significantly to the research on this project: Mr. William D. Shaver, Jr., formerly of the CONARC Historical Office; LTC Donald F. Harrison, formerly with the Office of the Chief of Military History; Mr. Thomas E. Hohmann and Mrs. Ruth Nester of the Modern Military Records Division, National Archives; Mr. James Craig of the Army Aviation Museum; and COL W. R. Mathews, Aviation Division, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff of Operations and Reserve Forces, Headquarters, CONARC.

RICHARD P. WEINERT, JR.